

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 20, 2013

Steven Miller
Acting Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Acting Commissioner Miller,

On February 11, 2013, I wrote to inquire about videos depicting television or movie parodies produced by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in its New Carrollton, MD television production studio. Given the IRS's requests for additional resources, it is important to determine whether and to what extent taxpayer resources were devoted to activities unrelated to your agency's core functions. A response, including copies of the videos, was due by the IRS on February 19. I am writing today because your response, dated March 4, 2013, was materially incomplete.

In your letter you state that the IRS's goal of "mak[ing] voluntary compliance with the country's tax laws as easy as possible," requires effective employee training. And further that the IRS's production studio "allows the IRS to provide education and training to large audiences, both within the IRS and to the public, often while reducing travel and other costs associated with such programs." This explanation sounds both plausible and reasonable. However, your agency's refusal to timely produce copies of the IRS parody videos to the committee is unacceptable.

Your letter admits that \$60,000 in taxpayer money was used to produce two specific video segments; a Star Trek parody and a skit based on the television sitcom Gilligan's Island. My request was for production of those videos to the committee. Your offer "to make both videos available for viewing" is not responsive to the original request. While committee staff agreed to travel to the IRS and view the videos as an initial matter, it continued to be the prerogative of the committee to insist that a copy of the video be provided. Since then the request for the Star Trek video has been reiterated, but the IRS has refused to comply.

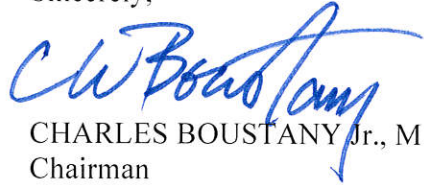
Upon receipt of this letter, I request that you direct that the Star Trek segment be delivered to the committee immediately. Separately, I request that you provide answers to the following no later than April 3, 2013.

1. An accounting of all costs associated with the production of the Star Trek video;
2. Any communications regarding the production, distribution, or posting of the videos referenced above, including the IRS's response to my February 11 inquiry;

3. A detailed account of all taxpayer money spent by and through the New Carrollton studio, including, but not limited to: leasing expenses, personnel costs, and all contracts let by the studio or other IRS divisions for use of the studio.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5522.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Boustany Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

CHARLES BOUSTANY Jr., M.D.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight